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PRESENTATION
OF THE
ROYAL AWARDS.

THE Founder's Gold Medal to Baron C. VON DER DECKEN, for his two surveys of the lofty mountain of Kilimandjaro, which he ascertained to be capped with snow, and to have an altitude of 20,065 feet. The Patron's or Victoria Gold Medal to Captain JAMES A. GRANT, for his journey from Zanzibar across Eastern Equatorial Africa to Egypt, in company with Captain Speke, and for his contributions to the work of that Explorer.

The PRESIDENT having called up the Baron C. von der Decken, thus addressed him :—

“ BARON CHARLES VON DER DECKEN,

“ This Medal is decreed to you for the two remarkable journeys which you have performed from the East coast of Africa to the great Mountain of Kilimandjaro, in each of which, with the assistance of Mr. Richard Thornton in the first and of Dr. Kärsten in the second, you made many astronomical observations, and constructed a contoured map of the region. You also determined numerous altitudes by barometrical measurement, and estimated the highest of the peaks of the mountains to be 20,065 English feet above the sea, and proved it to be covered with snow.

“ In these expeditions you further collected rock specimens which have demonstrated that, in a remote period, this snow-capped mountain was an active volcano.

“ The accuracy of the observations made in your last journey was proved by a comparison of the chronometers you took with you, which, having been compared on your return to Zanzibar, were found to have varied only 7" in 120 days.

“ I further applaud your unabated zeal and energy in your present desire to explore the interior of Eastern Africa, inasmuch as you have just fitted out at great expense a new expedition, and have constructed a river iron-steamer wherewith you hope to ascend one of the rivers flowing from Mount Kenia, and thence to explore unknown regions, and if possible to follow down one of the main eastern affluents of the Nile. And, as you have named your new vessel the *Guelph*, I trust that this name, cherished by Englishmen who lived in the days when Hanover and England

constituted, as it were, one country, may be a happy omen of the success which we all hope may crown your noble enterprise."

Baron VON DER DECKEN replied :—

"This is but the second time that I have had the honour of being present at a Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society. The first time, besides being kindly welcomed, I was elected an Honorary Member of the Society, and now a still greater honour is awarded me. It is quite impossible for me, as a stranger unfamiliar with the English language, adequately to express my thanks for the distinction. It is true, I always entertained a hope that, after returning from my travels, I might perhaps have the good fortune to receive a Medal, a gift which every Explorer ought to look forward to as the highest testimonial of his work having been well and successfully done. Whether the journey for which I am now preparing will be a success, God only knows! But I have the firmest determination; and, if any accident should arise to myself during the expedition, I have made such disposition that my party (consisting of several able and scientific men) will be able to carry out my plans.

"Happy and proud as I am to-day, there is still some sadness mingled with it. I miss here my poor friend the late Richard Thornton, your countryman and my companion during my first excursion to Kilimandjaro. We did not at that time reach so great an elevation as I did in the second journey, in which, with the aid of Dr. Kärsten, I corrected the mistakes of the first. Thornton was nevertheless the first European besides myself who penetrated farther than the low hills surrounding the great mountain, and settled by his testimony the question of snowy mountains in Equatorial Africa. He was a good companion, and extremely useful during the expedition, by taking observations, working very laboriously with the theodolite, and as a geologist in collecting and describing the rocks. If I ever come back to Europe and publish an account of my travels, I shall not omit to give due credit to my lamented companion.

"In conclusion I feel it my duty to express publicly my best thanks to you, Sir Roderick, our distinguished President, who, from the first time I made your acquaintance, were so kind as to give me in every way assistance and good counsel regarding my new expedition, and who have used your influence to obtain for me the support of Her Majesty's cruisers as well as of the authorities on the African coast."

In presenting the Patron's Medal to Captain Grant, Sir Roderick thus addressed that Officer :—

"CAPTAIN GRANT,

"Eleven months have elapsed since we received your leader, Captain Speke, and yourself within these walls, with the cordial acknowledgment of the great services you had performed in opening

out Eastern Equatorial Africa, and in showing how the White Nile flowed from the very lake previously discovered by your distinguished companion. Captain Speke having, on his arrival at Gondokoro, received the Medal most justly granted to him for the great discovery of Lake Victoria Nyanza, we, in conferring this Medal upon you, wish it to be understood that we once more emphatically mark our deep sense of the value of the first great exploration of those lands around it, made by Captain Speke and yourself.

“When you returned here our Anniversary had passed over, and both our Medals had been adjudicated, or you would, doubtless, before now, have received the highest honour which we have it in our power to bestow. It was, however, a source of true gratification to us to see that the King of Italy was, in the mean time, foremost in recognising your merit, as well as that of your skilful leader, and affixed to each of his Medals the appropriate motto of ‘Honor a Nilo!’

“On my own part I can truly say that, on the many occasions in which it has been my lot to present Medals to Explorers of distant regions, I never had greater satisfaction than on the present occasion. For now that I hand to you this Medal, bearing the effigy of Queen Victoria, I feel that we Geographers are not merely recompensing the noble and disinterested companion of Speke, but, as a soldier of the olden time myself, I have a special pride in recognising in you the gallant young Officer, who, in the Indian mutiny, and despite a severe wound, was the means of saving from serious disaster the rear-guard of the illustrious Havelock, as he advanced to the relief of Lucknow.

“Accept, then, this, our gracious Patron’s Medal, and consider it as our Victoria Cross.”

Captain GRANT then replied :—

“Sir Roderick Murchison and Gentlemen,—It was during a recent sojourn on the Continent that I received the communication from the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, announcing that they had unanimously awarded me one of their Gold Medals of the year. I assure you the receipt of this communication gave me intense pleasure; but it was a surprise to me, for I little thought I had done anything to merit so high and distinguished an honour. And to receive the Medal from your hands, Sir, from whom I have always experienced so much kindness, enhances the value of a gift which I shall cherish to my dying day. I feel so much embarrassed by the distinction you have conferred upon me, that I am quite unprepared to express myself in the language I should wish. I hope, therefore, you will excuse the few words in which I thank you for the honour you have done me.”